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SUBJECT: WESTERN SAHARA CONSULTATIONS, APRIL 21, 2008

11. This is an action request. USUN is instructed to draw upon the following elements during Western Sahara consultations on April 21, 2008.

Begin Elements.

-We appreciate the Secretary General's report, and welcome the Personal Envoy's frank assessment of the situation in Western Sahara. We appreciate the dedicated service of the Personal Envoy, Special Representative, Force Commander, and all MINURSO personnel, often under difficult circumstances. The conflict in Western Sahara has endured too long without a resolution. Whatever their view on the conflict, I believe that all parties can agree that the consolidation of the status quo is not in anyone's interest. Today I will discuss six key issues in the Secretary General's report, and examine his proposals for the way forward in Western Sahara.

-First, the U.S. strongly agrees with the view of the SYG and his Personal Envoy that the momentum from the process of negotiations can only be maintained by trying to find a way out of the current political impasse through realism and a spirit of compromise from both parties.

-To this end, we support the SYG's call that the parties enter into a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations, and we welcome the Personal Envoy's assessment on the way forward. (We support the Envoy's conclusions, and we look forward to the continuation of his efforts to facilitate meaningful negotiations between the parties.)

- Second, we are pleased that the Polisario and Morocco reiterated their commitments to the process of negotiations and to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1754 and 1783 during the fourth round of negotiations in Manhasset. The U.S. welcomes their commitment to continue the negotiations, and we urge them to demonstrate flexibility and the readiness to negotiate in good faith. We appreciate Morocco's efforts to advance the process by submitting a proposal that could form the basis of future substantive negotiations.

-Third, the U.S. welcomes the parties, agreement to explore the establishment of family visits by land routes, in addition to the existing program by air. We also welcome the cooperation that has resulted in an increase in the number of beneficiaries registered for family visits.

-Fourth, we recognize the parties, cooperation with MINURSO and the progress that has been made in mine removal, and urge the Polisario and Morocco to continue these efforts. As

the SYG has emphasized, this is a valuable contribution to the welfare of all Western Saharans and to the security of the Mission.

-Fifth, the U.S. emphasizes that any act of sexual exploitation or abuse (SEA) is unacceptable, and welcomes the training program for MINURSO staff on standards of conduct.

- Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to troop contributing countries, and welcome the recent deployment of female military observers. Additionally, we welcome the support the AU has provided to the Mission, and we thank and commend the efforts of the ICRC, the UNHCR, the FAO, and the WFP for their assistance to the Western Saharans.

End Elements.
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